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ONE OF TWO.

If the reader be a stickler for classical literature, and yet secretly not averse to that which is vulgarly called sensational writing, permit me to recommend him *Lycosthenes de Prodigis*. The freaks of nature therein recorded are really 'curious if true,' indeed at all events curious. One would have liked to have seen that cadet of a noble Polish house, although described as 'terrible to behold,' who was 'born with flaming and shining eyes; the mouth and nostrils of whom were similar to those of an ox; who had also long horns, but a back hairy like a dog's back; who had 'cats' eyes,' but by no means in the proper place, being situated considerably beneath the chest, whose expression, too, was not even good, for 'they looked hideously and frightfully; who had 'the heads of dogs upon both elbows and at the whirlbones of each knee,' like a carved arm-chair from Wardour Street; 'whose feet were like those of swans,' and who had 'a tail which was crooked backwards about half an ell long,' so that sitting down was an impossibility. This singular personage, being born at Cracow, remained perfectly silent until within an hour of his dissolution, when he uttered the exclamation, 'Watch!' which it was imagined bore reference to some impending calamity; perhaps the present Polish misfortunes, although in that case the warning was uncommonly early, being delivered in 1543.

Ambrose Paré, the French surgeon, describes a little monster of the Molline family at Antwerp, 'wholly like a dog, save that it had a shorter neck and the head of a bird'—which seems a very considerable exception. Also a young Savoyard, whom Nature appears to have endeavoured to apparel without the aid of any robenmaker. He had a long piece of flesh like a French hood hanging down from the nape of his neck almost to his heels, while two other pieces like the collar of a shirt were wrapped around his neck; he had white boots of flesh on his legs, doubled down, like the boots of our stage brigands; his colour in all other respects being a good durable drab. The

Duke of Savoy caused him to be brought to Court; 'which performed,' observes the narrator, 'one would hardly think the various censures the courtiers gave of the creature.'

These, it may be objected, are monsters, incapable of arousing any human interest, notwithstanding that Paré describes them as 'exciting such admiration that many ran very earnestly to see them. I do not propose to debate this question, for I have no personal interest in it whatever; only let us be cautious not to confuse these mere prodigies with double-people (such as the Siamese Twins) for I—the present writer—chanced to belong to that very respectable body (or bodies) once myself. I will even confess that the vulgar association of ideas induced by my singular—no, not singular—my peculiar position, led me to study that species of literature from which I have been quoting. It may be uncharitably surmised that I did this in order to derive satisfaction from the consideration that others had been more unfortunate than myself. I repudiate that imputation with scorn. If my *alter ego* had happened to be an agreeable person, I should have had nothing to complain of, but rather the reverse; for what can be pleasanter than never to find one's self without a companion? Always to have somebody to interchange ideas with? To keep one company on lonely roads, and at night? To be always at one's right hand—he was on *my* left, however—to protect, to assist, and to hold up one's umbrella in turn? I say 'one's' umbrella from habit acquired since our mutual separation, but, of course, it was an umbrella adapted for two. What a convenience there was in our arrangement with respect to that article! The single-man is harassed every morning with doubt as to whether he shall take a walking-stick or a protection against rain into the City; will it be wet or fine? The double-man entertains no apprehension whatever; his friend takes a walking-stick, and he an umbrella, or *vice versa*, and thus they are prepared for either contingency.

All this, however, depends upon one's being on good terms with one another, which in our case

was very far from being the fact. I do not believe John would have raised an alarm although I had been garrotted, if he had felt sure that the operation would not have been repeated upon his own neck. Perhaps we saw a little too much of one another, but certainly we entertained a decided mutual animosity: 'a little more than kin, and less than kind,' says the poet of certain single folks; he might have added of us, 'a little more than near, and less than dear.' As to John and myself being kin, we both of us rejected that theory altogether. We were simultaneous productions of nature—that was all. I did not consider that I was related to him; I only felt that I was connected—by a slight filament of flesh and blood—and even that upon the left side; a sort of Morganatic affinity. We had a common surname, of course; very much so, indeed, it being Smith; only John was John, and I was James. We were also excessively alike in personal appearance. There, let me hope, all similarity ceased. 'We rowed in the same boat'—if I may quote that witty remark respecting John and myself, who couldn't possibly have done such a thing—'but with very different skulls.' The world in general unfortunately did not take this into account. St Hilaire tells us that a double-headed man having killed a single-headed one in France, was acquitted of the crime, because it could not be traced to the right head, and it would never do to punish the innocent for the guilty. This was an admirable example of the proverb: 'Two heads are better than one.*' But the Gallic Tribunal was more just than is public opinion, and people in general set down all that was done by John to our common account. I remonstrated against many of his acts, but nobody listened to me, and least of all himself, although he certainly heard all I had to say. He was the stronger man of the two, and did pretty much as he liked. I was always placed next the kerbstone, when we walked in the streets; and at the crossings, he generally took care to put me between him and danger. We attracted no attention because we went arm in arm; only, upon the narrow pavements, we were sometimes rebuked by ladies for our rudeness in being two abreast. 'I am sure, madam,' I used to reply with earnestness, 'I wish we could walk otherwise;' upon which, John would give such an angry jerk at the filament, that there was not a dry eye among all the four.

Sometimes, too, we have hailed an omnibus, and the cad has replied: 'All right, gents; room for one inside, and the other atop;' at which we would shake our heads in a melancholy manner. As to getting upon the roof even in company, it, of course, was not to be thought of; I should have had to hang on—a mere outtrigger—by the filament while John ascended the narrow ladder. In whatever vehicle we went, we always paid for two places, although I believe the law would have held

us responsible only for one; but we did not wish to bring upon ourselves more notoriety than was necessary. Moreover, we were in tolerable circumstances, co-heirs of a good grocery business in the City, which we had disposed of for a round sum, since counter-jumping would not have been suitable for persons in our circumstances. For this reason, if for no other, we were not to be despised in the matrimonial market; and I am confident that I might have married well, and that several times, but for John's contiguity. As matters were, my choice was limited to those very few eligible young ladies who did not mind a third party being present at what should have been mere *tête-à-tête* interviews; who could speak the language of affection unreservedly, notwithstanding that there was an extra pair of ears to listen to it. More than once, was a promising affair nipped in the very bud by the *gaucherie* of my yoke-fellow, who would tear himself (and me) away from the most winning conversation, with the remark, that 'he had had enough of that fiddle-faddle,' or words to that effect. It may not have been pleasant for him; he might have felt a little *de trop*, I own; but no young woman with self-respect could be expected to put up with such rudeness. One after another declined my addresses, under various pretexts, but all having reference to my too constant companion. 'A mother-in-law living in the house would be nothing to him,' observed one indignantly. 'Why, we should never know what it was to be alone,' argued another. 'Darby and Joan is all very well,' remarked a third; 'but Darby, and Joan, and John are quite out of the question.' 'If you and I were one,' remonstrated a fourth, who had no little talent for mathematics, 'and you and John are one, then John and I would be one; which would be very disagreeable.' John's habits, too, were irregular, and it was urged with great reason and some force that he might refuse to come home till morning, or even get locked up in the station-house, in which case I might just as well, so far as my wife was concerned, have been as dissipated as himself.

One thing, therefore, appeared absolutely necessary to my entering into the matrimonial state—namely, that John should give up his bachelor ways and become a Benedict likewise. In order to bring this about, I set my affections upon one of two sisters, twins (but fortunately not united by any filament), so that in case John could be induced to admire the other, our double courtship could be carried on with some convenience. For once, my *alter ego* acted conformably with my wishes, and whenever Jessie Jones came to say a few honeyed words to me in her mother's back drawing-room, he was always ready to hold similarly sweet converse with her sister Jenny. The dear girls got at last to think little or nothing of our little peculiarity; although their friends could never quite get over it, but continued to ask us to dine on different days, or one of us to dinner and the other (generally John) to come in the evening—invitations which, of course, had to be declined.

* Similarly, the law of England sees no reason why a gentleman with three legs should not inherit landed property; rightly concluding, perhaps, that he has more to stand upon than any ordinary heir.

Perhaps this double marriage might really have come off, and have conferred a laurel upon the church of St Janus, in whose parish the Joneses resided; but the misconduct of John prevented it. I have said that he and I were ridiculously alike, but this was by no means the case with the Miss Joneses, the one—the one—being considerably more attractive than the other. Upon a certain occasion, when I happened to be engaged in perusing *Lycosth. de Prodig.*, my Jessie entered the room, and coming straight towards me with affectionate enthusiasm, was received with open arms by John. Perceiving this sign of welcome upon his part, she never reflected that he was upon the wrong side of us to be me, but gave him an affectionate embrace; while I went on with my studies, so that I might not interrupt the tender passages between my *alter ego* and (as I imagined) his Beloved Object. Not until Jenny came in—some minutes afterwards—was this base simulation discovered by either Jessie or myself. You may easily imagine our indignation; while, to crown all, Jenny actually accused her sister of being a not altogether unwilling victim of the deception. Such a very remarkable lovers' quarrel has rarely, I suppose, taken place before, and it was rendered still more exceptional by not being the renewal of love. Jenny declined to have anything more to do with John; and Jessie, although with much reluctance, declared that she could not subject herself to the possibility of such a mistake again. This misfortune, which appeared at the time to be so terrible, turned out in the end the cause of my enfranchisement. I was so enraged with John that I insisted upon our at once consulting the best surgeons upon the subject of a dissolution of partnership, a divorce *a vinculo*, as it might truly be called.

We had done this upon one occasion before, but having been informed that the experiment would be hazardous, had not ventured to undergo it. Now, however, Death itself seemed almost as welcome as this duplex existence; while, on the other hand, the prospect of a single life seemed as blissful as ever did married one to sighing lover. No suppliant before Sir Creswell Creswell, or his successor, was ever more anxious for a decree of dissolution than I. John would have been content enough to let matters stand as they were, and was disinclined to run any risk of losing his precious life: but I was not only firm but furious, and gave him to understand that, if Science would not aid us, I would part company from him at all hazards. 'Who would be free, *themselves* must strike the blow,' quoted I with meaning, and at the same time arranged my penknife in readiness for the worst. By this argument, I brought the respondent—if I may so entitle him—to reason. We pleaded our common cause before the arbiters of our fate, the proprietors of the scissors of destiny. They were unwilling to hazard the operation, and perhaps rather disinclined to mar such an admirable *lucus naturæ* as ourselves. In vain I enlarged upon our wrongs, and pathetically dwelt upon our

disqualifications. 'I am deprived, gentlemen,' urged I, 'by this mere strip of flesh, of the dearest rights of citizenship. I can represent no borough in parliament, except where there are two seats, and John happens to be elected to fill the other one—a thing most ridiculously improbable. Nor can I be a churchwarden, for John is a strong dissenter, and would insist upon carrying me off to chapel. I cannot even be lord mayor of this my native city, for mayors of that kind do not work in double harness.'

'You might, however, be the two sheriffs,' observed one of the eminent surgeons, a sort of man who would make a jest of a *post mortem*. 'All that you have urged Mr—I mean the gentleman upon the right-hand side—Mr James, is very pitiable, and would move a heart of stone; but it is better even not to be a churchwarden than to run the risk of sudden death. I honestly tell you that we do not know how to estimate the danger of dividing this curious filament: the separation may, for all we know, be dissolution to both of you.'

'Sir,' observed John, 'I am sorry to say that the person whom you address is obstinately determined to cut himself loose, at all events; and I, for my part, would prefer that the operation should be performed by you.'

This piece of information being very decisively corroborated by myself, our united prayer was granted, and with a snip of the scissors, John and I were parted for life. I have said that we resembled one another very nearly, but I never thought him so nice-looking as when I saw him then, for the first time, at the other end of a room. It was an instance of Distance lending Enchantment to the view, which the poet himself had probably never contemplated.

'There!' exclaimed the doctor, when he found that nothing vital had been injured. 'Go your separate ways. What was once a Wonder, is now but a couple of commonplaces.'

The only regret that I entertained was, that the thing had not been done long since, and indeed at the time when we were born; I might then have been spared many inconveniences, though the world would have thereby lost an interesting narrative. 'Good-bye, Jack,' cried I, with a familiarity that was the nearest approach to affection that I could assume. We had never been able to exclaim more than 'Good-night!' before; for our separation had been only an ideal one in the realms of sleep.

'Good-bye, James,' answered he sarcastically: 'give my love to Jessie.'

I did not need this taunt to urge me to flee to her whose name he thus profaned: but I did not hire a cab; I could not resist the temptation of taking an outside place upon an omnibus. Arrived at the Jones's house, I demanded of my still adored one that hitherto untasted of luxury, a Private Interview, in the course of which I reinstated myself in her good graces. Before I left her, I took the precaution of instituting a private watchword, by which she was always to recognise the true Antipholus, in case Mr John

should ever again attempt to take advantage of his resemblance to myself. Very soon after I became a single man, I married; and up to the present time, I have had no reason to suspect that the precaution in question has not been efficacious.

SHOOTING-STARS.

SEVENTY years ago, a German philosopher, named Chladni, published a tract on meteoric astronomy, and in it ventured to propound the opinion, that masses of stone might fall upon this earth from unknown space, and that the traditions of such masses having fallen were not myths of ancient history, but credible facts. What little attention this publication obtained was not of a very complimentary nature; some laughed at it, more disregarded it, but in the hands of the few, it remained as valuable material for future investigation. Nature, however, came to Chladni's support. In July 1794, twelve stones fell at Siena; in the following year, a mass of meteoric matter, weighing fifty-six pounds, fell in Yorkshire; and on the 19th December 1798, a splendid meteor was visible at Benares. At eight in the evening, in a perfectly cloudless sky, appeared a large ball of fire; a noise resembling thunder was heard, and then the sound of falling bodies. 'The light from it was so great as to cast strong shadows from the bars of a window on a dark carpet, and it appeared as luminous as the brightest moonlight.' It only lasted a few minutes. Search was made, and stones weighing two pounds and under were found buried in the earth to the depth of five or six inches. Specimens of these stones were forwarded to Sir Joseph Banks, who encouraged further inquiries; Howard aided with analysis and a remarkable paper in the *Philosophical Transactions*, which finally placed the subject before the scientific world. From that time, the most learned astronomers and geometers gave it their attention; and under their hands, it gradually emerged from its unknown state; though all their efforts could as yet, from the great difficulties in observation, effect but little.

Meteoric astronomy may at this time be divided into three parts, separate to a certain extent, but united by a common origin: aërolites, fireballs, and shooting-stars, which last are of more frequent occurrence than the rest. Aërolites are masses of stone which fall, in general, without any brilliant luminous display, though their descent is usually accompanied by a loud detonation. To this class belongs the famous stone of Ensisheim, a portion of which is preserved in the British Museum: the account from which the following is extracted was drawn up at the command of the Emperor Maximilian: 'In the year of the Lord 1492, on Wednesday, which was Martinmas Eve, November 7, a singular miracle occurred; for between 11 o'clock and noon, there was a loud clap of thunder, and a prolonged confused noise, which was heard at a great distance; and a stone fell from the air, in the jurisdiction of Ensisheim, which weighed two hundred and sixty pounds, and the confused noise was, moreover, exceeding loud. Then a child saw it strike on a field in the upper jurisdiction, towards the Rhine and Jura, near the district of Giscano, which was sown with wheat, and it did no harm, except that it made a hole there. . . . When they found that stone, it had entered into the earth to the depth of a man's stature, which everybody

explained to be the will of God that it should be found; and the noise of it was heard at Lucerne, at Vitting, and in many other places, so loud, that it was believed that houses had been overturned.'

Fireballs are, as the name signifies, a ball of fire which generally bursts, and scatters small stony or metallic fragments. Such was the meteor at Benares. Shooting-stars, we may conjecture, are small meteoric bodies, which (though only visible for a moment), if they chanced to fall on our earth, would probably attach themselves to the class of fireballs. These fall sporadically (that is, as single stars) or periodically in vast swarms. In these swarms often occur fireballs; in fact, the two classes cannot be considered separately. Both phenomena are frequently seen at the same time; occasionally the larger merges into the small. As before said, if a fireball bursts, its fragments, though they may not reach the earth, would assume the appearance of falling-stars.* The annual return of these meteoric showers did not attract notice for many years, although, in numerous ancient writers, the allusions to and accounts of such showers shew how steady has been their re-occurrence. The two great falls are in August, on St Lawrence's Day, and on the nights of the 12th and 13th of November. The former, in old English calendars, received the name of 'the fiery tears of St Lawrence'; the latter, or November period, though more brilliant, is less steady in its return, being liable to intervals of some years.† Others calculated that the maximum of the November period occurred every thirty-four years, and foretold an unusually brilliant display of meteors in 1867. The August stream is unfailing in its return, as many must have noticed last year, when hundreds of falling-stars were visible on the night of the 10th. The chronological tendency of the Chinese gives us notices of many starry showers; and singularly enough, Biot found that most of those recorded corresponded with the stream of St Lawrence. These Chinese records take us back more than six hundred years before Christ—to the time of the Tarquins and the second Messenian war. Livy narrates that a shower of stones fell on the Alban Mount, one of the seven hills of Rome, in the reign of Tullus Hostilius, about 654 B.C.; and Plutarch mentions the gigantic

* 'The remarkable meteor of August 18, 1783, traversed the whole of Europe, from Shetland to Rome, with a velocity of about 30 miles per second, at a height of 50 miles from the surface of the earth, with a light surpassing that of the full moon, and a real diameter of fully half a mile. Yet with these vast dimensions, it changed its form visibly, and at length quietly separated into several distinct bodies, accompanying each other in parallel courses, and each followed by a tail or train.'—*Herschel*.

† Our readers may probably be interested in the following extract, which we are permitted to give from a private letter of the celebrated Mary Somerville. It is dated November 22, 1834. 'We did watch for meteors on the evening of the 12th, and Dr Somerville saw a magnificent one, like a sky-rocket, pass right across from south to north at a quarter before ten. Soon after, my maid, who had walked from town, declared that, at a quarter past nine, *un tas de comètes* had rushed along the sky. I unluckily saw neither, and have heard nothing further on the subject; but I have written to Dr Bowditch at Baden, in America, to ask his opinion of those that appeared there in the years 1832 and 1833, and shall let you know as soon as I get an answer. Of course, any theory as to their cause is a matter of conjecture; but a recurrence of phenomena so striking, and in such multitudes, three different years, on the same day of the month, and during the same time of the night, leads to the inference of a periodic origin.'

stone of Ægos-Potamos, which fell 405 B.C., and was seen five hundred years after by the Elder Pliny, who describes it as of the size of a wagon. Four hundred and seventy-two years B.C., Theophrastus of Byzantium speaks of the sky at Constantinople being, in November, 'as if on fire with flying meteors;' and in 599, on Saturday night (say the annals of Cairo), in the last Moharrun (October 19, 1202), the stars appeared like waves upon the sky, towards the east and west; they flew about like grasshoppers, and were dispersed from left to right: this lasted till daybreak; the people were alarmed. Other writers compare them to 'fiery rain falling like locusts;' but the most vigorous and suggestive simile is in the Chronicle of Rheims, where a stream of meteors, in the time of William Rufus, is described as 'the stars in heaven were driven like dust before the wind.' Of the later detailed accounts of these unusually brilliant starry showers, one of the first is in a Portuguese record, as follows: 'In the year 1366, and twenty-two days of the month of October being past, three months before the death of the king, Don Pedro [of Portugal], there was in the heavens a movement of stars, such as men never before saw or heard of. At midnight, and for some time after, all the stars moved from east to west; and after being collected together, they began to move, some in one direction, and others in another. And afterwards, they fell from the sky in such numbers, and so thickly together, that as they descended low in the air, they seemed large and fiery, and the sky and the air seemed to be in flames, and even the earth appeared as if ready to take fire. That portion of the sky where there were no stars seemed to be divided into many parts, and this lasted for a long time. Those who saw it were filled with such great fear and dismay, that they were astounded, imagining they were struck dead, and that the end of the world had come.' Humboldt, when travelling in South America, was a spectator of one of the most splendid displays of this kind ever known. It was on November 13, 1799, and was visible all over the northern and southern continents of America. 'Towards the morning of the 13th, we witnessed a most extraordinary scene of shooting-meteors. Thousands of bodies and falling-stars succeeded each other during four hours. From the beginning of the phenomenon, there was not a space in the firmament equal in extent to three diameters of the moon which was not filled every instant with bodies or falling-stars. All the meteors left luminous traces or phosphorescent bands behind them, which lasted seven or eight seconds.'

Another account of the same phenomenon, as seen from the Gulf of Mexico, says the meteors 'flew about in all possible directions, except from the earth, towards which they were all inclined, more or less; and some of them descended perpendicularly over the vessel in which we were, so that I was in constant expectation of their falling on us.' But the most recent of these prodigious meteoric showers occurred on the nights of the 12th and 13th November 1833, and, like the preceding swarm, was visible all over America. 'The stars fell, on this occasion, like flakes of snow; and it was calculated that at least 240,000 had fallen during a period of nine hours.' The phenomenon commenced at midnight, only reaching its maximum at 5 A.M.; and many of the meteors were remarkable for their peculiar form and size. One hung for some time in the zenith, immediately

over the Falls of Niagara, 'emitting radiant streams of light.' But the appearance, and effect on the mind, of this spectacle will be best understood from the account of a planter in South Carolina, who was an eye-witness. 'I was suddenly awakened by the most distressing cries that ever fell on my ears. Shrieks of horror and cries for mercy I could hear from most of the negroes of the three plantations, amounting in all to about six or eight hundred. While earnestly listening for the cause, I heard a faint voice near the door calling my name. I arose, and taking my sword, stood at the door. At this moment, I heard the same voice still beseeching me to rise, and saying: "O my God, the world is on fire!" I then opened the door, and it is difficult to say which excited me the most—the awfulness of the scene, or the distressing cries of the negroes. Upwards of a hundred lay prostrate on the ground, some speechless, and some with the bitterest cries, but with their hands raised, imploring God to save the world and them. The scene was truly awful, for never did rain fall much thicker than the meteors fell towards the earth—east, west, north, and south, it was the same.'

The reader will notice that the interval between these two swarms, the most prodigious on record—1799, 1833—seems to support Olbers's theory of the maximum recurring every thirty-four years. Of course, it is only lengthened observation in the future, and careful examination of past accounts, which can decide the correctness of this hypothesis.

In Milner's *Gallery of Nature*, the meteors of the last-mentioned swarm were described as of three kinds: 1. Phosphoric lines, apparently described by a point. These were the most abundant; they passed along the sky with immense velocity, as numerous as the flakes of a sharp snow-storm. 2. Large fireballs, which darted forth at intervals across the sky, describing large arcs in a few seconds. Luminous trains marked their path, which remained in view for a number of minutes, and in some cases for half an hour or more. The trains were commonly white; but the various prismatic colours occasionally appeared, vividly and beautifully displayed. Some of these fireballs were of enormous size; indeed, one was seen larger than the moon when full. 3. Luminosities of irregular form, which remained stationary for a considerable time. The one mentioned above as having been seen at the Falls of Niagara was of this kind.

The circumstance of primæstic light attending the train of fireballs, is well attested; also the light of the train remaining visible so long after the disappearance of the fireball itself. 'Admiral Krusenstern saw, in his voyage round the world, the train of a fireball shine for an hour after the luminous body itself had disappeared, and scarcely move throughout the whole time.' Sir Alexander Burnes, in his travels in Bokhara, dwells on the exquisite loveliness of variously-coloured falling-stars, and says the atmosphere is there so pure, that 'there is a never-ceasing display of the most brilliant meteors, which dart like rockets in the sky; ten or twelve are sometimes seen in an hour, assuming every colour—fiery red, blue, pale, and faint.'

Of sporadic stars, there is an average of from five to seven visible every hour on a clear night. These are stray visitants, in contradistinction to the prodigious swarms of November and August, which observation during twenty-five years has decided as

accurately returning phenomena. Arago gives a summary of the times in each month when meteors are chiefly seen; it is as follows: January. Shooting-stars are rare, 1st to 4th, if at all. February. The ancient showers of meteors announced for this month by the chroniclers seem to have failed for the last eight or nine centuries. March. Occasionally. April. From 4th to 11th, and 17th to 25th. May. Shooting-stars are rare. June. Shooting-stars are very rare. July. The apparition of showers begin now to increase in number; we may expect them about July 26th to 29th. August. The well-known period of 9th to 11th. September. Rare, but possible from 18th to 25th. October. In the middle of the month. November. As usual from 11th to 13th, though less abundant. December. About 5th to 15th.

From this it will be seen that shooting-stars are much more numerous during the latter half of the year, when the earth is passing from summer to winter, or, in astronomical phraseology, from aphelion to perihelion. The same increase of number in the last six months of the year is observable in the appearance and fall of fireballs and aërolites.

Now, by what theory can we account for this accurate return of meteors in each year? In only one way: that there exists an annulus of small bodies, revolving with planetary velocity round the sun. When these bodies come within the limits of our atmosphere, they are rendered visible to us as shooting-stars or fireballs, which last perhaps 'let fall more or less strongly heated stony fragments, covered with a shining black crust,' known to us as meteoric stones. This way of accounting for aërolites, as emanations from exploded fireballs, occurred to the Greeks, one of whom (Diogenes of Apollonia), says: 'Stars that are invisible, and consequently have no name, move in space together with those that are visible. These invisible stars frequently fall to the earth, and are extinguished, as the stony star which fell burning at Ægos-Potamos.' We are accustomed to the idea of invisible cosmical bodies, from more than one brilliant star, having suddenly disappeared from sight; and when we think of the trifling size of even the largest known meteor, we can receive the idea of them moving by millions, silent and invisible to us, through infinite space. They can only be, when compared with the other bodies of the solar system, as motes dancing in a sunbeam.

But the scientific world was reluctant to believe that we could 'touch, weigh, and chemically decompose metallic or earthy masses, which belong to the outer world, to celestial space.' To have done this, would have been simply acquiescing in the opinions of our great Newton, that all the members of the celestial world were composed of the same materials as the earth, variously connected. Rather than accept this theory, it was thought necessary to suggest hypotheses, more flattering to the ingenuity than the judgment of the learned. First came the atmospheric theory, which supposed that minute atoms were drawn up from the surface of our planet, and being collected far above the clouds, were there consolidated into masses of the desired size, which fell, by the force of gravitation, as meteoric stones, to their common origin—the earth. Scarcely more probable was the volcanic hypothesis, which admitted the possibility of volcanoes ejecting stones with such force as to carry them far into the atmosphere, whence they would descend with immense force and velocity to the earth. This returning

force, however, would be as nothing compared with that which Popocatepetl must exert to impel a stone a hundred and forty miles into space! In both these cases, there was a difficulty to overcome in the oblique direction in which most meteoric stones have struck the earth. In the former case, the atmospheric currents diverted the descending aërolite from its vertical direction; in the latter, they were supposed to have been ejected at corresponding obliquities. Another volcanic source was proposed—from the volcanoes of the moon. From them they were to be impelled with such force as to reach the limits of terrestrial attraction. When once under this influence, the bodies would circulate in constantly-diminishing orbits round the earth until they fell upon its surface. As soon as this selenic origin was suggested, Olbers, Laplace, Poisson, and other geometers, began to calculate the amount of initial force requisite to bring a body from the lunar regions. This inquiry continued during ten or twelve years, and ended by proving that an original force of projection would be required equal to 114,000 feet to a second. As this even did not allow for atmospheric resistance, the theory was reluctantly abandoned.

The acceptance of the planetary hypothesis as the most rational way of accounting for the systematic re-occurrence of meteoric showers, is a great testimony to the sagacity of Chladni. As he first drew attention to the subject, so his theory has proved the one generally adopted after much controversy. The periodicity and parallel divergence of all the shooting-stars from the same apex or point in the celestial sphere, could only be accounted for by the supposition of a ring, or elliptical annulus of meteors. Supposing this ellipse is crossed by the earth twice in her annual course, and that the traversing of each node occupies a day or two, we may at once account for the periodic profusion of meteors. And the parallel divergence of the stars from the same place in the heavens at each period, is exactly what would occur if the orbits of the earth and planet-meteors intersected. In the November period, all the stars emerge from the region of γ Leonis; in August, from β Camelopardali; the latitude of the apex is changed, but not the geometrical fact of divergence from a common source.

But, on this principle, the contact of the orbits having occurred once, *must* continue each year. This is not the case; there are breaks in the return of the November period, and also great inequality in the splendour of the displays; or there are total cessations of other periods, as in the February showers, which, though recorded for years by ancient chroniclers, have not been encountered for eight or nine centuries. Two solutions of the difficulty have been proposed. The one by Herschel suggests that it is not a ring of equally-distributed bodies; but 'if the ring be broken, or if it be a succession of groups revolving in an ellipse *not* identical with that of the earth, years may pass without a rencontre; and when such happens, they may differ to any extent in their intensity of character, according as richer or poorer groups have been encountered.' Or these interruptions may be caused, as suggested by Poisson, from the superior attraction of the large planets on the very small bodies. 'If the group of falling-stars form an annulus round the sun, its velocity of circulation may be very different from that of our earth, and the displacements it may experience in space, in consequence of the action of the various planets, may

render the phenomenon of its intersecting the plane of the ecliptic possible at some epochs, and altogether impossible at others.'

But these points, and many others connected with this branch of astronomy, are still subjects of speculation, and of speculation beyond the limits of this paper. Among these is the question, Where and how do these stony masses ignite and become luminous? Is it within the limits of our atmosphere, or far beyond it in unknown space? Or do they gain their light but for the moment by reflection, to lose it again in the shadow of the earth, and pass into darkness? These matters still require time to solve. If this is 'a new planetary world beginning to be revealed to us,' we may hope that its principles may become known to us, as have been those of the greater members of the cosmical family to which these multitudinous meteor-planets belong.

LOST SIR MASSINGBERD.

CHAPTER III.—THE DREAM BY THE BROOK.

ALTHOUGH my story must needs be sombre wherever it has to do with that person whose name it bears, yet I hope there will be found some sunny spots in it. During the first few months after my arrival at Fairburn, there was nothing to sadden life there that I knew of. I passed my days under green leaves; and not only in a metaphorical sense, for every fine afternoon, immediately after study was over, I betook myself to the Park. The whole place was watched as zealously, even in summer, as the gardens of the Hesperides, but Mr Long had obtained permission for me to roam at large therein. To me, vexed from childhood by Indian suns, Fairburn Chase—as that part of the demesne most remote from the Hall was called—was far more delightful than it could have been to any mere English boy. Its stately avenues of oaks, tapering into infinite distance, with their checker-work of beam and shade, was the realisation of my dreams of forest beauty; nor was its delicious coolness marred by the broad strips of sunlight, at long but equal distances, like the golden stairs of the Angels' Ladder, for those, I knew, marked the interlacing of 'the Rides,' themselves as fair, and leading, not as the avenue did, to the outer world, but into secret bowers known only to the deer and me.

When Marmaduke was not with me—which often enough happened, poor fellow, and particularly after that unfortunate meeting with his uncle in the churchyard—the whole Chase seemed abandoned to myself. I dare say it was not really so, and that if I had not been a privileged person, I should soon have found out my mistake; but for days and days I never saw any human being there. Now and then, the figure of a game-keeper, dwarfed by distance, would make its appearance for a moment, to be lost the next in some leafy glade; but the sense of solitude was thereby rather increased than otherwise, just as the poet tells us in a case where the ear and not the eye was concerned, 'the busy woodpecker made stiller by his sound the inviolable quietness.' Lying, couched in fern, in that lordly pleasure-place, I have myself entertained some poetic thoughts, although they never found expression; even now, as I shut my eyes, I make an inward picture of some such resting-place; nothing to be seen but

the long green feathery stems, which the summer air just stirs about my brow, and the broad branches of the oak that stretch themselves motionless between me and the sun; nothing to be heard but the coo of the ringdove, and the swift stealthy bite of the dappled deer. Nor did Fairburn Chase lack water to complete its beauty. In front of the Hall itself moved a broad slow stream, which presently slid, rather than fell, down ledges of mossy stone into a wilderness of trees and shrubs, through which it wandered on like one who has lost his way, but singing blithely nevertheless. Another stream, which was my favourite, burst, spring like, from the very heart of the Chase—having been artificially conveyed beneath the avenue—and ran, quite a little river, and at a great rate, to form the island where the herons lived; after which, as though it had done its work, it went its way tranquilly enough. If it had nothing to boast of but the Heronry, it might have been a proud little brook, for never did colony of those solemn birds take their sad pleasure in a more lovely spot; but, besides, it had a certain bend in it—essential to the beauty of a brook, as straightness is to that of a tree—which I have never seen rivalled elsewhere. Its right bank rose there, though not abruptly, and left half its bed of brown sand and loose tinkling shingle bare to the sunlight, save so much of it as the shade of a cluster of lime trees could cover; here the bee and the bird brought their songs, and the dragonflies the glory of their turquoise armour and glittering wings throughout the summer noons. The cool fragrant smell of the limes, and the drowsy music of the insects that haunted them, were inexpressibly pleasant to me, who, I am afraid, had not a little of the Asiatic indolence in my nature. Sometimes a group of swans sailed by on the unruffled stream, themselves a slumbrous pageant fit enough to herald sleep; but, at all events, swans or no swans, I often did sleep there. One July afternoon, in particular, when the heat was almost as intense as at Calcutta, and no punkahs to cool one, I went to this place with malice prepense, to lie there and do nothing, which, from my youth up, has always been synonymous with a *siesta*. I cannot do absolutely nothing and yet keep awake. I very much admire the people whom I often meet in railway carriages, who endure, without books or newspapers, hundreds of miles of weary travel, and who do it with their eyes open. I wonder they do not break out into a melody, or at least a whistle; they cannot possibly be thinking all that time, and, indeed, they have no appearance of employing themselves in that way, but 'stare right on with calm eternal eyes,' with no more speculation in them than those of the Sphinx herself. I envy, but I cannot imitate those happy persons; there is no such state of coma with me; I either wake or sleep.

I lay, then, beneath the limes by the brook in Fairburn Chase, half-buried in the soft brown sand; and even while I looked upon the glancing stream, with the grand old willow opposite, that bent its hoary honours half-way o'er, the scene dissolved and changed; the brook became a river, and the willow a palm-tree, and the Chase a sandy tract, and the fir-clump on the distant hill the show-capped Himalaya. I saw, too—and, alas! I was never more to see them, except, as then, in dreams—my father and my mother; but they passed by me with pitiful, loving looks, and went their way.

Then the ayah, the black nurse who was watching over me—for I was once more a child—stole down to the river-brink, and drew a fluted dagger from her bosom, and dipped it in the sacred flood, and I felt that I was to die. I knew her well; we two had loved one another as nurse and child do love, where the nurse perforce takes half the mother's part; as the child grows up, his affection, at the best, congeals to gratitude; but not so with the breast that suckled him—God forgive us men; and the pain of my dream was sharpest because it was my own dear ayah who was about to slay me. I had offended Vishnu, or else she would not have done it; her gods demanded my life of her; but she was sorry; I felt her cold lips upon my brow, and then a large round tear fell upon my cheek like icy hail, and I awoke. There was a tumult of sounds in the air; the birds, and the bees, and bubbling wave, silent while I had slept, seemed to have burst out together in chorus at my waking. I was bewildered, and knew not where I was. My dream was more distinct at first than the realities about me. If I had but closed my eyes again, I knew that it would be continued at the spot where it had left off, that the fluted dagger would have drunk my life-blood; and therefore I made an effort to rouse myself. Wondrous are dreams, and wondrous the border-land 'twixt life and sleep! If my existence had depended upon it, I could not for some seconds have told for certain whether I was in England or in India. Then reason began to reassume her sway, and the vague mysterious powers, of whom we shall one day, perhaps, have a more certain knowledge, withdrew reluctant from their usurped dominion over me. I remembered, however, most distinctly every incident that they had brought about, and I placed my hand mechanically upon my left cheek—I had been lying upon my right—upon which the tear had seemed to fall. Great Heaven, *it was still wet!* I was really startled. The cloudless sky forbade the idea of a drop of rain having fallen; I had shed no tear myself while dreaming, for my eyes were dry, and even if I had, it could scarcely have dropped as it did, making a cool round spot in the centre of the cheek—it would have slid down, and left a little frigid line: there were no stones for the stream to splash against and thus besprinkle me.

It was very odd. Still, I did not imagine for a moment that my poor black nurse had really come across the seas to drop the tributary tear upon her sleeping boy; moreover, she could scarcely have got away so suddenly without leaving some trace of her departure; some—My heart all of a sudden ceased to beat; a shiver ran through me, as runs from stem to stern through a doomed ship that comes end on at speed upon a sunken rock; my eyes had fallen—while I thus reasoned with myself—upon a sight to terrify an older man than I, after such a dream; *the print of a woman's bare feet in the sand.* Had there been any footprints—those of a keeper or watcher, for instance—I should have been startled to know that some one had passed by while I slumbered, for most certainly the sand had been untrodden up to the moment I had lost consciousness; but that a woman with naked feet had been really present while I dreamed that horrible dream, was something more than startling. In Scotland, such a circumstance would have been less remarkable, but in Fairburn I had not yet seen any person without shoes. There were a

considerable number of footprints, but only of one individual: she had stood beside me for some time, for they were deeper close to the place where I had lain, and there was also one impression there which looked as though the mysterious visitor had knelt. They had come and returned the same way, which was not the one that I had come myself, and they began and ended at the stream-side a few yards beyond, and out of sight of the bend which was my favourite haunt. The woman had doubtless crossed and recrossed by means of some natural stepping-stones that shewed their heads above water; there was no path on the other side, but only a tangled thicket, through which it would have been impossible to track her, even had I been so disposed, which I was not. To say truth, I was terribly discomposed. For a minute or two, I clung to the notion, that the footprints were my own, made perhaps under the influence of somnambulism; I took off my shoes, and measured the tracks with my own feet, but I found, boy as I was, that mine effaced them. They were certainly the marks of a woman, smaller than those of a grown male, yet firmer set than those of a child. Never since the days of Robinson Crusoe was ever man so panic-struck by footprints in the sand as I. Although it was broad daylight, and the air was alive with sounds, I fairly trembled. The many evil stories which, during my short stay at Fairburn, I had already heard of the old Hall, a corner of which I could discern from where I stood, crowded in upon my brain; the whole demesne seemed under a malign influence—enchanted ground. I turned from the spot, whose lonely beauty had once so won my soul, with fear and loathing, and as I turned, there rang out—it may have been from the thicket across the stream, but the echoes took it up so suddenly, that it seemed to ring all around me—a laugh so terrible, so demoniacally mocking, that I could scarcely believe it came from mortal throat. Again and again it rose, and circled about, as though it would have headed my fleeing steps, and driven me back upon some dreadful Thing, while I fled through the fern towards home at my topmost speed, and the white-tailed rabbits scampered to left and right, less frightened than I.

CHAPTER IV.—THE DUMB WITNESS.

A sentiment of shame prevented my mentioning the affair of the footprints to my tutor; and as for Marmaduke, although we were by this time very intimate, I would not have furnished him with a new occasion for detesting Fairburn Chase, upon any account. Not only, however, was my favourite haunt by the brook become an object of aversion to me, but I confess I took much less delight in any part of the Heath demesne. I kept my eyes about me, even in the great avenue, and, upon the whole, preferred the rector's little garden, if at any time I had a mind for sleeping out of doors.

'Meredith,' observed Mr Long to me one morning—he called me 'Peter' generally; but when he had anything serious to say, it was 'Meredith'—'it appears to me that you don't take nearly so much exercise as you used to do; your appetite is failing; I am really concerned about you.'

'Thank you, sir; I am pretty well.'

'Nonsense, Peter; no boy should be "pretty well;" he should be in the rudest, vulgarest health, or else he is in a bad way. Your good

father advised me, that if you seemed the least to need it, I should get you a nag. It is Crittenden Fair next week; what say you to my buying you a horse?

'Thank you, sir; that is just what I should like,' cried I. 'I am certainly getting tired of walking about alone'—and then I began to blush a little, for of late, rather than go into the Chase, I had been accompanying my tutor in his favourite diversion of fishing, which I cared nothing about, or else in his parochial expeditions.

'Don't be afraid to speak out, my boy,' said Mr Long, with a kind smile; 'you will not hurt my feelings. You and I are very good friends, but you want somebody of your own age to be your companion. Isn't that it? And very natural too. No young gentleman, except in story-books, enjoys the society of his tutors. Even Sandford and Merton got a little tired of good Mr Barlow, I fancy; he was so desperately full of information. You want a fellow who can shy stones and climb trees.'

'No, sir; indeed I don't,' said I, a little indignantly, for I was getting too old, I flattered myself, for any boyish escapades of that sort. 'But I do wish that Marmaduke was allowed to come out with me a little more. Would not Sir Massingberd let him have a horse also?'

Mr Long shook his head, and was silent for a little; then, as if in continuation of his thought, he added: 'And yet, I don't know. We'll go over to the Hall and see about it this very morning.'

'I, sir?' inquired I in astonishment, for I had never set foot in Doubting Castle, or seen it from any nearer spot than the Heronry.

'Did I say "we?"' said Mr Long reflectively. 'I didn't mean to do so, but I really see no reason why you shouldn't come. You would wait a considerable time if you waited for an invitation from Sir Massingberd, but—Tush, if poor Marmaduke lives there, and yet remains a good boy, half an hour's visit will not be the ruin of the lad.' The latter part of this remark was uttered aloud, although intended to be strictly private, which was not an uncommon occurrence with my worthy tutor, and I have noticed the same peculiarity in other persons of studious habits. He led the way into the road at once, pursuing which under the Park wall, we presently came upon a little door, which my tutor opened with a private key. This admitted us into the wall-garden, or, as it was sometimes called, from the quantities of that fruit which it contained, the peach-garden. An enormous area was here entirely given up to the cultivation of fruits; in the centre were strawberry-beds, gooseberries, melon-beds, the glasses of which dazzled you to behold; and raspberries upon trellis-work, on so extensive a scale that it looked like a maze. The northern end was occupied by an enormous greenhouse, which, in those days, was rather a rare adjunct, even to a rich man's garden. But the most surprising sight was that of the walls covered with spread-eagled fruit-trees, or, as school-boys then called them, 'Lawk-a-daisies,' laden with the most exquisite dainties—peaches, nectarines, apricots, and bloomy plums. A number of men were busily employed about this teeming scene.

'Why do they say Sir Massingberd is poor?' inquired I. 'Is not all this his?'

'Yes; it is all his.'

'Well, but what valuable fruit, and what

enormous quantities of it! Why, he would make a large income, even if he was to sell it.'

'He does sell it,' replied my tutor smiling. 'Nineteen out of twenty of all these peaches will find their way to Covent Garden. Why, how could he eat them, you foolish boy? Even if he gave them away to all Fairburn, he would introduce the cholera.'

'A baronet and a market-gardener!' exclaimed I. 'Well, that seems very odd.'

Mr Long did not choose to inform me at that time that almost all the income Sir Massingberd had drawn from this source, and from the selling of game, with which his great preserves were overflowing. The staff of gardeners and of keepers was retained mainly upon this account. In the interest of Marmaduke, Mr Clint, the family lawyer, did, I believe, contribute a certain annual sum for keeping up the gardens and the Chase; but this was by private arrangement, and at his own risk and responsibility. Thus it was that while some parts of the Fairburn demesne were as admirably maintained as possible, others were suffered to fall into decay. Just as we emerged from the wall-garden, for instance, there was a small artificial hollow planted with trees, and within it, peering above ground, a thatched roof, covered with moss and mildew, and with great gaps and holes in it. This was the ice-house—in these Wenham Lake and Refrigerator days, an almost obsolete building, but in the time I write of, considered a necessary appendage to every country-seat. Next we entered an arcade of immense length, which the noonday rays would have striven in vain to penetrate, but for the spaces where the trellis-work had given way through age and neglect, and the ivy trailed down from rusted nails, and obstructed the way. Seats were placed in niches at unequal intervals upon one side of this arcade; but they looked very unattractive, damp, worm-eaten, cracked, and here and there with a slug upon them, making slimy paths. Yet from one of these alcoves there started up, while we were still a long way off, a female figure, and stood for a moment looking at us in great surprise. Above her happened to be one of those broken portions of the leafy roof, and through it the sunlight poured right down in a golden flood, as a glory sometimes does in ancient pictures. A tall dark woman, who must have been exquisitely beautiful in her youth, and even now retained considerable attractions; her eyes were large and lustrous, and her hair—never even in India had I seen hair more dark, or so luxuriant. It was not rolled tight at the back in a great pillow, as was then the fashion, or, indeed, confined in any way, but streamed down over her shoulders, and far below that place where it was the pleasure of our ancestresses to consider that their waists occurred. She cast upon us at first a glance haughty and almost defiant, but upon recognising my companion, quenched her fiery looks.

'Stop here, my lad,' whispered Mr Long, laying his hand firmly upon my shoulder; 'wait till she has gone away.'

The woman saw the gesture, although she could not have heard the words. 'I shall not bite the boy, Mr Long,' cried she with a shrill laugh; 'however, I will make myself scarce.' She took a few rapid steps to an opening on the right of the arcade, which led to the lawn and flower-garden, and was lost to us in a moment.

'I did not know there were any ladies at the Hall,' said I.

My tutor did not answer, but walked on muttering to himself, as if annoyed; I did not repeat the remark, for I was wondering within myself whether it could be this woman who had watched my sleep, and knelt by me, dagger in hand, according to my dream. She looked just the sort of female to drive such an instrument home, if she entertained that fancy—a Judith, equal to the slaying of any Holofernes, and far more of a slight-built, overgrown Indian lad like me. There was certainly something uncanny about her; and I thought it very strange that Marmaduke had never spoken to me of her existence.

The arcade brought us out into a sunk garden, which was a rosary, on to which opened the tall windows of a noble-looking room. The walls, I could see, were lined with books, and on the numerous tables lay portfolios and volumes that gave promise of great store of plates. This was the library, where Marmaduke had told me he passed his only happy hours at Fairburn. His uncle rarely so much as entered it, although he was not without some reputation for learning. In particular, it was said that he was well acquainted with Divinity, and could quote chapter and verse of the Bible against the parson. I have since had reason to believe that his talents in this way were greatly exaggerated. What he had ever read, he doubtless recollected, if his memory served him as well in literary matters as when he had a grudge to pay; but I cannot think that he had ever studied divinity. If he had any knowledge of the Bible at all, it doubtless astonished all who knew him, and they made the most of it.

A few steps further brought us to the north face of the mansion, in which was the principal entrance. Notwithstanding the broad sweep in front of the steps, and the avenue branching right and left, there did not seem space enough, as contrasted with the vast mass of trees. The scene was like a clearing in a forest, where the openings are artificial, and the wood comes by nature, rather than the converse; and even in that September day the air struck chill. The griffins that guarded the great stone steps had lost, the one an ear, and the other a wing; and the steps themselves were chipped and cracked. The grass which grew there unchecked at other seasons, had, however, been scraped out, because Sir Massingberd's guests were expected immediately for the shooting. None of them, however, had as yet arrived. The great bell which answered our summons clanged through the place as though there had been neither furniture nor people within it. The vast door was opened long before its echoes ceased, and, indeed, with marvellous quickness. When the man saw who we were, he looked vexed at having put himself in a flurry without necessity. He had thought it might have been his master who demanded admittance, and had come post-haste from the pantry, it being very dangerous to keep the baronet waiting. We were ushered into the great hall, and left there while the man went to seek Sir Massingberd. This huge apartment was evidently used as a sitting-room; there were couches and comfortable chairs in profusion, and a fine aroma of tobacco pervaded everything. The walls were ornamented with antlers and the heads of foxes; a number of fishing-

rods stood in one corner; in another lay some of those clubs that are used for exercising the muscles. On the table was an open pocket-book, stuck full of gorgeous artificial flies. Presently the man reappeared. Sir Massingberd would see us in his private sitting-room. We walked over polished oak, on which I could with difficulty keep my footing, down a long passage hung with grim portraits of the Heath family—'all dead and judged,' as Marmaduke subsequently informed me—until we came to a short flight of steps on the left hand; these we descended, and following the footsteps of our conductor, in almost perfect darkness, came upon double doors, the inner of which, a baize one, admitted us into the presence of the proprietor. The baronet was in his shirt-sleeves, cleaning a double-barrelled gun.

'This is my pupil, Peter Meredith,' said Mr Long. 'I know the young gentleman,' replied Sir Massingberd curtly, and the horse-shoe upon his brow contracted as he spoke. 'What makes you bring him here?'

'Well, Sir Massingberd,' observed my tutor, forcing a laugh, 'that is scarcely a hospitable observation. I bring this friend of your nephew's because what I have to propose concerns them both. It is good for these boys to be together, not to live solitary lives; and to keep them mewed up at home, as they are now, is a positive cruelty. Marmaduke is getting thinner and paler every day; and Meredith—'

'Do you really think so, parson?' asked the baronet eagerly, omitting for a moment to use the dirty-looking piece of oiled flannel which had previously monopolised his attention.

'I do, indeed, Sir Massingberd. I believe that if a doctor was to give his opinion about that boy—'

'The Heaths never send for doctors—or for clergymen,' interrupted the baronet dryly.

'And yet they have often needed advice both spiritual and temporal,' quoth my tutor stoutly. 'I say you should get a horse for your nephew's riding; it need be no trouble to you whatever. I am going over to Crittenden Fair next week myself to purchase one for my pupil; now, let me get one for your nephew also.'

At first Sir Massingberd's countenance expressed nothing but angry impatience, but presently he began to rub the gun-barrel less and less violently.

'And who is to find the money?' inquired he. 'I think that can be managed, Sir Massingberd. Mr Clint will doubtless listen to such an application on behalf of Marmaduke; he will risk advancing a few pounds'—

'For thirty-five guineas, one can get a very good pony,' observed the baronet reflectively.

'Or even for less,' returned Mr Long drily; and then, to my excessive terror, he added in quite as loud a key: 'He wants to keep the difference; that's his plan.'

'And he means to do it, too,' observed Sir Massingberd grimly. 'No, you needn't apologise, parson, for your thinking aloud; you don't suppose I am going to do anything without being paid for it, do you? Then there's the keep of the animal. Now, what will Mr Clint allow me for that, do you suppose? Oats and beans are very expensive, and you wouldn't have me feed my dear nephew's pony upon hay!'

Sir Massingberd was a formidable object at all times, but I really think he inspired more fear

when he was pleased—when some wicked notion tickled him—than even when he was in wrath.

'I think, Sir Massingberd, the question of expense can be managed to your satisfaction,' said my tutor, not a little overwhelmed by having thus involuntarily expressed his suspicion of the baronet; 'and, as I said, I will save you all trouble by selecting the horse myself.'

'Certainly not, sir,' exclaimed Sir Massingberd savagely; 'I suffer no man to choose my horses for me.'

'Very good,' replied Mr Long, biting his lip. 'I have only to stipulate, then, that if your nephew gets the horse, he is to ride it. I shall have to make myself answerable for that much to Mr Clint.'

'Oh, he shall ride it,' quoth the baronet, with a horrid imprecation; 'you may take your oath of that. And, by the by, since you are here, parson, I want to have some talk with you about that same fellow Clint, who has been behaving devilish ill to me, I think.—You may go away, young gentleman, you may. You'll find your future riding companion—he has about as much notion of riding as old Grimjaw yonder—sulking in his own room, I dare say. Grimjaw, shew the young gentleman up to Marmaduke's room.'

At these words, a dog of horrible aspect came out from under the very sofa on which I sat, and tottered off towards the door. He was the oldest and ugliest dog I ever beheld. He had only one eye, which was green; he had no teeth, and was therefore not to be feared as a combatant; but his aspect was loathsome and repulsive to the last degree. The people of Fairburn imagined this animal to be Sir Massingberd's familiar demon, and, until of late years, when the creature had become incapacitated by age from accompanying him much, the two were scarcely ever seen apart. Old as he was, however, the hideous Grimjaw had some instinct left, which, after the word 'Marmaduke' had been once more shrieked at him, caused him painfully to precede me up the oak staircase, and along another gallery to a chamber-door, at which he sat and whined. This was immediately opened by his young master, who, with a 'Come in, Grim,' was only giving sufficient space for the entrance of the dog, when I cried out laughing: 'What! have you no welcome for your friend? Like uncle, like nephew! What a pair of curmudgeons inhabit Fairburn Hall!'

The astonishment of Marmaduke at hearing my voice was excessive. Notwithstanding his pleasure, his first thought, as usual, was: 'Did Sir Massingberd know?'

'Yes,' said I coolly; 'of course he knows. He received me down stairs with his usual politeness. Mr Long and he are conversing upon some private matters, so I came up here to see you. It is arranged that each of us is to have a horse, and that we are to go out riding together.'

'A horse! Oh, impossible!' exclaimed Marmaduke, clapping his hands. 'How did the good parson ever persuade my uncle? What did he give him?'

I could not help laughing at this naïve inquiry, which my friend had made in perfect seriousness. I told him all that had occurred, including our tutor's *viola-voce* soliloquy, at which Marmaduke cried 'Heavens!' in terror. 'It is marvellous, notwithstanding, that my uncle should have consented,' observed my companion musing. 'He told me,

indeed, that I should be a great nuisance in the house this month, while his friends were down here shooting; but that he should have entered into an arrangement which gives me pleasure as well as gets rid of me, that seems so very strange.'

'He has doubtless some base motive,' returned I smiling; 'let us console ourselves with that reflection. But what have we here? Water-colour paintings! Why have you never told me you were an artist?'

'I merely amuse myself with the paint-brush. I have had no lessons, of course, so that my perspective is quite Chinese.'

'Nay, but I recognise almost all these scenes!'

'Well, you know, I have been nowhere else but at Fairburn, so that it is from thence I must take my subjects. The one you have there is taken from the bend in the stream beyond the Heronry.'

'It is admirable,' said I; and indeed it was so like the scene of my dream, that it gave me a shudder.

'Would you like to have it?' replied Marmaduke carelessly. 'You may take any that the portfolio contains. I only wish they were more worth your acceptance.'

'Thank you,' said I nervously. 'I will certainly take this one, then; and I rolled the sketch tightly up, and placed it in my pocket. 'But here is a pretty face! Why, Master Marmaduke, you have your secrets, I see; you have never mentioned to me this young lady. What beautiful hair! The eyes, too, how glorious, and yet how tender! It is surely not the lady whom we just met in the ar'—'

'Silence, sir!' cried Marmaduke, in a voice of thunder. His face was lurid with rage, and for the first time I remarked upon his forehead a faint reflection of the horse-shoe that made so terrible the brow of his uncle. 'Do not speak of that wretched woman in the same breath with—' with'— He did not complete the sentence, but added in his usual soft musical tones: 'Pardon me, my friend; I am sorry to have been so hasty; but that picture is the portrait of my mother.'

'It was stupid in me not to have known that at once,' said I. 'The likeness is most remarkable.'

'But not the expression,' returned he sadly. 'I know that just now I looked like one of my own race. She was always an angel, even when she was upon earth.' And the boy looked up with his hands clasped, as though he beheld her, through his tears, in heaven.

'Did you paint that from a picture, Marmaduke?'

'No, from memory. Sleeping or waking, I often see her sweet face.'

I had evidently raised by my thoughtlessness a long train of melancholy thoughts in my companion. The situation was embarrassing, and I did not know how to escape from it. As often happens with well-intentioned but blundering persons, I made the most inopportune remark that could be framed. Forgetting what I had heard of the infamous treatment which Mrs Heath had received while under her brother-in-law's roof, I observed: 'Your mother was once at Fairburn, was she not? That should at least make the Hall more endurable to you.'

Again Marmaduke's handsome face was disfigured with concentrated passion. 'Yes, she was here,' returned he, speaking through his teeth. 'For what she suffered alone, the place would be cursed. Coward, scoundrel! Why does God suffer such men to live? It was terrible to see how like

this young lad grew to the man he was execrating. He went on using such language as I could not have conceived him capable of employing.

'Marmaduke,' said I soothingly, 'for Heaven's sake, be calm. Providence will one day reward this man; it is not for you to curse him. Come, now that I pay you a visit for the first time, you should play the host, and shew me over the mansion. Why, that queer old dog seems to understand what one says; he rises as though he were the *châtelain*, and kept the keys of Doubting Castle. He brought me here as true as a blind man's cur. I cannot say, however, that he is beautiful; he is hideous, weird.'

'It would be strange, indeed, if he were like other dogs,' returned Marmaduke gravely. 'He is the sole living repository of a most frightful secret. If he could but speak, he could perhaps send a man to the gallows.'

'What man?' exclaimed I. 'Pray, explain to me this mystery.'

'I do not know what man,' returned my companion solemnly; 'I only conjecture. I will relate to you what is known of the matter, and you shall judge for yourself.'

Marmaduke opened the door, to see that no one was in the passage without, and then seating himself close beside me, commenced as follows: 'My grandfather and the present baronet lived on bad terms with one another. For the last ten years of his life, Sir Wentworth and his eldest son never met—but once—if they met at all. He had been very profligate and extravagant in his young days; but in his old age he grew miserly. When my father saw him last, it was in a small house in Bedford Place in London, where he lived in a couple of ill-furnished rooms, and without a servant. Grimjaw and he slept there alone, but a charwoman came in every morning for a few hours. Sir Wentworth then gave it as his reason for this kind of life, that he was retrenching, in order to leave some suitable provision for his second son. "Look here, Gilbert," said he upon one occasion to my father; "I have begun to lay by for you already;" and he shewed him a quantity of bank-notes, amounting to several thousand pounds. He had never been an affectionate parent, or exhibited any self-denial for the benefit of his sons; and my father did not believe him. He thanked him, of course; but he came away without any idea that he would be really better off at Sir Wentworth's death. This was fortunate for him, for he never received a farthing; but I am not so certain as he was that the baronet did not intend to do what he promised. While the old man was living in this sordid fashion, his son Massingberd was passing his time very gaily at court. He played high, and there were few who could beat him with the cards—but there were some. It is no use being a good player, you see, unless you are the best; you only win from those whom you can beat, to lose it in your turn to the man who can beat you. Thus it was with my uncle, who played, as I say, high with everybody, but highest, as is often the case, with his superiors in skill. However, he paid his debts of honour with money raised at an enormous sacrifice. He lived well, but it was upon his future prospects. At last, being harder pressed than usual, he wrote to his father—the first letter he had penned to him for years—and demanded pecuniary help. Sir Wentworth wrote back a cynical, harsh reply, a copy of which I have seen—for all these details

came out in the course of the inquest. He bade his son come to call upon him, and judge from his style of living whether he was in a condition to comply with his request. He appointed a day and an hour—about five o'clock. It was in December, and quite dark of course by that time. At six o'clock on the appointed day, Sir Massingberd—for he had got his title by that time, whether he knew it or not—called at the police-station near Bedford Place, and gave information that the house which his father occupied was shut up, and that he could not obtain admittance, although he had arrived there by appointment. The house was always shut up, they told him, although not untenanted; they could not explain why his summons had not been answered. A couple of policemen accompanied him to break open the door. While they were thus engaged, a dog howled at them from inside. My uncle had made no mention of having heard this before. There was only one lock to force, the door being neither bolted nor chained, and they soon got in. The only two furnished rooms in the house opened upon the hall. In the sleeping-room, they found my grandfather dressed, but lying on the bed quite dead—suffocated, as the surgeons subsequently averred. In the sitting-room, with which it communicated, they found this dog here, crouching on the top of the mantel-piece, which was very lofty. How he got there, nobody could tell; if he leaped thither, even from a chair, it must have been in an agony of terror. He was whining pitifully when they entered; but upon seeing my uncle, he ceased to whimper, and absolutely seemed to shrink into himself with fear. Poor Grimjaw could give no witness at the inquest, however; so the jury returned an open verdict. It was possible that Sir Wentworth had had a fit of apoplexy, which carried him off.'

'Well,' said I, 'and is not that probable enough?'

'Yes; but it could not have carried off the bank-notes—which were all gone—likewise. Could it, Grimjaw?'

Thus appealed to, the ancient dog set up a quivering howl, which might easily have been mistaken for the cry of an accusing spirit.

'Good Heavens! this is too horrible,' cried I. 'Be careful, Marmaduke, that you do not mention this to others. It is a frightful slander.'

'Slander!' returned my companion calmly. 'It is you who slander, if you suspect anybody. I have only told you what everybody knew at the time the mur—well, then, when Sir Wentworth had his fit. The thing strikes you as it does me, that is all.'

'But is it not inconceivable,' urged I, 'if the crime was committed by the person we are thinking of, that he should retain this dumb witness of his atrocity, that he should let it live, far less should keep it in his private sitting-room?'

'No!' interrupted Marmaduke firmly. 'On the contrary, it strengthens my suspicions. You do not know the man as I do. It gives him gratification to subdue even a dog. This creature has no love for my uncle; but its excessive terror of him, which endured for months, nay, years, has gradually worn off. He obeys him now; whereas, as I have been told, it was long before it could do anything but shiver at the sound of his voice. After dinner, when I have been sitting with Sir Massingberd alone, he will sometimes give the dog a biscuit, saying with an awful smile: "Here, Grimjaw; you and I know something that nobody else knows; don't we?"'

'Great Heavens!' cried I in horror; 'and what does he do that for?'

'Because,' replied Marmaduke bitterly, 'he loves to see me tremble.'

HOW THE ENGLISH COUNTIES WERE FORMED.

MANY a school-boy, poring over his map of England, has wondered how the counties came to be what they are, especially in *shape*. If the map be fully coloured, so as to shew the boundaries distinctly, the oddities of this conformation become all the more striking. For a fun-loving boy, they afford plenty of picture-forming. Northumberland is a night-cap all awry; Durham, a sirloin of beef; Cumberland, a dog with very short legs, running up a hill; and so forth. Bedfordshire is jagged at the bottom edge, as if Herts had been making a desperate attempt to seize Dunstable, and had failed. Berkshire, tolerably stout in the west, becomes wonderfully thin near Reading. Cambridgeshire has two or three large double-teeth near St Neots. Cheshire ends with a bird's head on the north-east, and a bird's tail on the north-west. Gloucester and Worcester perform a country-dance at their common boundary—cross hands, advance and retire, and so forth; and Hereford does the like both with Shropshire and Worcester. Lancashire looks as if Cumberland, after a tough struggle, had broken off the peninsula of Furness, Abbey and all, and run away with it across Morecambe Bay. Herts has made a desperate attempt to cut Middlesex in two, and has only got the bit between Southgate and Edmonton still to manage. The waist of Oxfordshire is so thin, that a little tighter lacing would pinch it asunder altogether. The way in which Buckinghamshire runs into Oxon and Herts has already set the conundrum-makers to work. Still more strange is it to see the manner in which little bits of counties are left out in the cold, separated from the home to which they seem naturally to belong. Two bits of Berkshire have been thus ill-treated, and driven out into Oxfordshire; while another bit is found in Wilts. Two orphans are quite close together: a bit of Bucks in Northampton, and a bit of Oxon in Bucks. A part of Derbyshire has leaped clean across the boundary into Leicestershire. A little lump of Devon, severed from the parent, is so curiously jammed between Dorset and Somerset, as to belong to either, or both; and Devon, in revenge, steals a bit from Dorset. Worcester holds itself together very weakly; seeing that fragments are imbedded in three of the neighbouring counties. Gloucester has stolen a little from Wilts, and Wilts has done the like to Gloucester. Sussex has torn off a long, narrow strip, from Hants, and carried it over the hills and far away. Hereford is worse than Gloucester, for no fewer than four other counties contain bits belonging to it. Cambridge so wedges its foot into Huntingdon as to sever a slice. A fragment of Kent has leaped across the river Thames, and quietly reposes between North Woolwich and Barking, where Essex ought to be.

It is believed that these peculiarities in the forms of the English counties are traceable, in most instances, up to the Anglo-Saxon times. When the Angles, Saxons, and Jutes came to this country from the regions on either side of the mouth of the Elbe—nearly fourteen centuries ago—our land was

in an imperfectly governed state. The inhabitants, deserted by their Roman conquerors, were in no condition to offer any lengthened resistance to the Teutonic new-comers. The military chieftains who came over rewarded their followers with land, a portion, called a *mark*, being given to each clan or kinsfolk; and it is believed that the chief towns of many of these marks are traceable to the present day in their names, which denote the kin or family to whom the land was given. Thus, Malling, Steyning, Bocking, Ealing, Halling, Epping, Gidding, Reading, are believed to denote the marks or lands of certain kinships or *gens*. The relation between the chief and the follower, was very intimate among the Teutons of old. The leaders of the emigration to Britain had each his band of devoted liegemen, who would be sure to vie with each other in deeds of perilous daring, and to whom, when the enemy was completely humbled, the chief apportioned rewards in land, booty, or distinguished office. Each *family* of followers (for they came over in whole families—brothers, sons, wives, children, and all) had a mark, or portion of land, as a part of the reward; each kinship having a portion of arable land, with the woods, fens, pastures, &c., thereto appertaining. 'This home of a Teutonic community,' says an able writer in a recent number of the *Home and Foreign Review*, 'enthroned amid the rich corn-bearing slopes and green level meadows of some river-valley; the houses of the colonists, standing on some rounded eminence where the ground was dry, and yet springs were plentiful; the nearer woodland on the hillside, with its gnarled oaks, giving pasture to numerous swine; the less-disturbed forest higher up, giving cover to various wild animals, and stretching up to the water-shed—perhaps a barren heath, or a rocky fell, or the unbroken forest still—where the mark terminated, and the territory of the mark in the neighbouring parallel valley began: this picture—every feature of which, where it needs it, may be verified by an appeal to copious documentary evidence—can easily be reproduced to the imagination of him who, walking on a summer's day round the boundaries of some old slumbering country parish—boundaries which can often be proved to coincide with those of Saxon marks—observes how beautifully adapted are the different portions of its territory to the supply of all the primary wants of human life.' The marks or lands of the kinships or families of Mæla, Stæna, Boca, and the like, are believed to have in this way received the names of Malling, Steyning, Bocking, &c.; and of many other names which do not end in *ing*—such as Eaitington, the *ton* or clearing of the kindred of Eata; Arlingham, the *homestead* of the Arlings, &c.

Now, the point to bear in mind is, that these smaller divisions of land preceded the formation of counties. Mr Kemble, in his learned work on the *Saxons in England*, has proved almost to demonstration that there was no such thing as a county or shire in the early days of Anglo-Saxondom. The counties are supposed to have arisen somewhat in the following way. The great Saxon chieftains, few in number, constituted themselves kings of the portions of Britain which they were able to conquer. Each had a capital or chief city—Canterbury for Kent, Winchester for Wessex, &c. As their people spread further and further from these cities or centres of government, the kings appointed sub-kings, under various designations, to govern the

remoter districts as tributary, but practically independent rulers. The boundaries between the several kingdoms generally consisted either of rivers, or of undesirable land, such as forest, marsh, or moorland. The border settlers, on this 'no man's land' of forest, marsh, or moor, advanced nearer and nearer to each other as population increased; and not without some wrangling and fighting did they settle down, each under some one sub-king. The boundaries of the *mark* were defined, according to the gift of the donor; but those of the *scire* or shire were the result of a compromise, after probably a good deal of struggling. To this day, it is observable that the boundary districts between counties are generally less fertile and desirable than those in the middle of the counties; the former were less grasped at, and were more willingly left to form lines of separation. Although operating in different ways, these less fertile portions separated kingdom from kingdom and shire from shire, as well as mark from mark. The first rulers of portions of kingdoms were virtually petty kings; but in time the monarchical principle strengthened, and these petty kings became only *eorlдерmen*, or governors of those main divisions of the kingdom which constituted shires. The *eorlдерman* was the head of the shire for civil, military, and judicial purposes. One particular shire, when this arrangement began, included the two modern counties of Worcester and Gloucestershire; whereas modern Kent was then two shires, under two *eorlдерmen*. Most of the early shires, however, seem to have had about the same dimensions as the modern counties. The shire town was generally near the middle of the shire; and in it was held the shire-mote or county court, for the settlement of disputed questions.

It now becomes possible to determine, in a general way, why our counties have often such ragged edges, with interlacings of adjoining shires, and complete severance and isolation of particular portions. When the borders became gradually brought into profitable cultivation and use, and the borderers met there from either side, disputes would soon arise, where no such processes as regular surveying had been carried on. 'Individual energy would come into play; a bold and active settler would make a push in advance, now from one shire, now from the other. The lie of the ground would favour such squatting enterprises here, and impede them there; each shire-mote would sustain its own thanes; and the general result would be, to compromise matters by agreeing to take rivers and streams for the shire boundary, so far as their direction permitted, and to unite these conventional portions of the frontier by running artificially marked lines across the intervening hills. The trouble of marking out such lines, and of keeping them up, would induce the selection of river and stream boundaries to the utmost extent possible.' Then, as to the detached portions of counties: 'A commanding hill, visible from afar across the marches (or boundaries), and offering a strong site for a castle, might be seized and fortified by an enterprising thane—say from Worcestershire; while the country round it, lying upon the whole more conveniently for the men of Staffordshire, would be gradually occupied by them. Such was perhaps the case with Dudley and its district, a piece of Worcestershire completely enclosed in Staffordshire. . . . It is highly

probable that there was a castle here [even] in the Saxon times; and if so, it must have been founded by a Worcestershire thane, whom, thus securely posted, Staffordshire, though she could cut off from his county, was never able to dislodge.'

It thus appears probable, on various grounds, that the county *town* preceded the *county*; and that, according to the force and weight of the central authority represented by the shire-mote, and summed up in the *eorlдерman*, the shire expanded its borders at the expense of a weaker neighbour, or contracted them under the pressure of a stronger.

Too much space would be required to explain the origin of the *names* of counties—why, for instance, some begin with *North* or *Nor*, and others end with *land*, or *folk*, or *set*, or *sex*—or to notice the particular counties formed out of the various Anglo-Saxon kingdoms. It suggests an interesting inquiry, however; and so does that relating to the abbreviations to which the names are liable, and their right of claim to certain terminations. Do the words *county* and *shire*, for instance, mean the same thing? Some writers say yes; some give a decided negative; others are doubtful. As there is no town of *Somerset*, why should we say *Somersetshire*; and as we do use this name, why not *Surreyshire*; are both these counties also shires, or are they not? One writer says that as *shire* is a word of Anglo-Saxon origin, and *county* of Norman or French origin, we may reasonably infer that they are forms of the self-same name, and that the two names mean the same thing. Another writer, however, asserts that none of the counties are called shires except those which formed component parts of the larger Anglo-Saxon kingdoms, such as *Wessex*, *Mercia*, and *Northumbria*. This last statement, if correct, is one of some historical interest; but for all general purposes, a reader may content himself with believing that county and shire have the same meaning. Some of the names of counties have singular abbreviations—such as *Oxon* for *Oxfordshire*, *Salop* for *Shropshire*, and *Hants* for *Hampshire*. The abbreviations *Beds*, *Berks*, *Bucks*, *Herts*, and *Notts*, are obvious; but in *Devon* we slip off every letter of the 'shire.' We cannot escape from the truth, that the names altogether form a strange jumble, varying remarkably not only in their terminations, but in their whole character, and very difficult to commit to memory.

A TIMELY REMONSTRANCE.

THE fact doesn't admit of a doubt—Pantomimes are not so good as they were in my young days; and I maintain that the deterioration is solely the fault of Clowns, the absolute rulers of the Christmas roast. Newspapers habitually flatter these gentlemen; they have stock phrases about the motley mantle of Grimaldi having fallen on So-and-so—that somebody is imbued with an ample share of the true Grimaldian humour. Rubbish! Why mince matters? Clowns, who should be the prime ministers to public enjoyment at this season, are now a days little better than poor jacks in office; and they get worse every year. I want to bluntly speak my mind to these worthies.

Don't tell me that it is *Paterfamilias* who changes with the lapse of time, and can no longer appreciate pantomimes and clowns. Hasn't Mr Round-

about lately confessed in one of his essays, that to the end of his days he hopes never to forego even reading about pantomimes in that delicious sheet of the *Times* which appears on the morning after Boxing-day, when he likes to lie in bed, and have the paper for two hours to read all the way down from Drury Lane Theatre to the Britannia at Hoxton. The enjoyment of Christmas pleasures is pure and perennial. If those pleasures cannot be enjoyed, the fault lies on their own side. Not appreciate pantomimes and clowns! Tell me, can that man be pointed out who has grown up indifferent to the fascinations of Christmas plum-pudding? Not he. Whenever a separation between the two takes place, it will always be found, on inquiry, that the Pudding is in the wrong, and disagrees with the Man. Similarly, that 'a new grand comic Christmas pantomime, with tricks and transformations,' generally falls flat upon years of discretion, is no proof of their lack of relish or appreciative power; but, alas! because in it—the Pantomime—now a days, half-a-dozen cardinal principles are studiously neglected; laborious and expensive, yet withal inefficient devices are vainly substituted; and the Clown—its hero—diverges from the sure and beaten paths, and seeks all manner of ingenious but suicidal ways to fame.

Let the introductory portion of pantomimes pass with the remark, that they are as good as, or probably even better than ever. They display smart dialogue, captivating actresses, magnificent scenery, bewildering mechanical combinations, and a general expenditure more than requisitely lavish. In a word, they are galaxies, appealing to, and amply gratifying our senses. Nevertheless, with all their splendour, they fail to move deep-seated emotions in the human breast, and to stir the very depths of our being, as will the action—'grand, epic, homicidal'—of the pantomime proper; Clown's part of the pantomime—which begins at the transformation.

The transformation! Ah, what, almost universally, is it now? When scenes can no longer advance and unfold themselves—when their surface is covered with ballet-girls and gold—when the force of many-coloured fires and gas and tissue can no farther go—then, from wings and traps (and without a word of explanation), a double company and a set of alarming sprites, with strongly-developed eyebrows, tumble and jump upon the untenanted stage—*untenanted*, mark!—and there wriggle about, an inexplicable and, for all we know to the contrary, a purposeless medley. The sight of familiar garments and the cheery echo of the frequent slap alone tell us what has happened—that we need look for no more, and must accept glitter and this illegitimate procedure for the entrancing mysteries of the ancient transformation. Who changes into whom? Where is the Good Fairy to bid Philip the Falconer 'afresh begin Love's tender course as spangled Harlequin;' and 'then entwine His fate with Rose, now Columbine?' Where is the Evil Genius to direct Rose's father and the wicked Baron to

Still pursue the pair and glad the town.

As tottering Pantaloon, and mirth-inspiring Clown?

Where now be all the separate visible changes, each to its proper sort of tune, each with its proper 'business?' And also, friends, your special gibe that was wont to set the house in a roar? Even playbills have turned traitor to the good old cause.

Closely as we may scan the type, we yet fail to trace the characters. 'The Baron de Bottlenose, &c. . . —afterwards Clown.' There is nothing of this sort now. How delightful it used to read in the old days! What an excitement it was—after that we had plucked somewhat from the tree of knowledge, and had begun to get dangerously knowing—to try to detect portions of the Clown's dress beneath the Baron's, or to catch a glimpse of his blooming cheeks and coral lips through the ample mouth of the henchman's mask! It had all the sweetness of stolen fruit. It was delicious, intense, a gratified yearning of the Youthful after the Beautiful and the Infinite. But at present we know not what becomes of Baron or Squire, Philip or Miller. We saw the last of them a quarter of an hour ago in the previous scene; since then, an inexplicable blank has intervened. Of yore, performers played right through a pantomime, as a matter of course.

Next, do you ever reflect upon the painful fact that English boys are now growing up wholly ignorant of the nature and efficacy of the Buttered Slide? But how should they do otherwise, when pantomime after pantomime ignores its existence, or else allusion to it is so brief and faint, that all, save expectant well-trained eyes, fail to detect it? Yet, what wholesome food for mirth is here! What statical and dynamical lessons—the laws of gravitation, of bodies in motion, of falling bodies, of impact! Remember the bold colouring and breadth of detail of which a Buttered Slide in its integrity admits: 'the confidence of Pantaloon invited; his ready acquiescence gained; the prompt appropriation of a goodly roll of freshest Dorset. (Mouths water sympathetically as you portray the intensity of pleasure derived from the licking of the unctuous morsel.) 'Now,' in husky dulcet tones, you whisper Pantaloon—'now we'll have a lark!' and forthwith amply grease the path. Supers enter, fret their brief hour on the stage, and form a prelude to the approach of—'STUDENT!' whose hapless lot it ever is to fall in evil pantomimic places; he slips, trips, scrambles, falls, and ever rises, Anteus-like. Still you, ecstatic, ply the butter; he never for a moment halts, or falls upon his back, or moves his eyes from close perusal of his book; until at last, commiserating, you point and grin, and cry aloud: 'Poor gentleman!'

Again the Spill and Pelt; to what has that degenerated? Why, once in an evening a knot of long-striding youths and screaming maidens, all in sad-coloured attire, hurry pell-mell from wing to wing, pursued by a policeman or two, and a mere handful of high-flying carrots. What a falling off is here! We have now no longer the organised mob—image-men, fishwomen, green-grocers, crockery-sellers, bakers, police—running in Indian file across the stage, out at one wing, round at back of flat, and in again at the other, for you and Pantaloon to spill and pelt, and bring every scene to a conclusion amid a protracted eruption of vegetables, crockery, images, and fish.

Melancholy changes for the worse, these; but they almost vanish in comparison with the next cause of complaint to be preferred against you. *What has become of the red-hot poker?* On behalf of the entire community, I repeat, with becoming warmth of expression, *WHAT HAS BECOME OF THE RED-HOT POKER?* Down on your marrow-bones, every mother's son of you—for I don't believe there

is a living Clown who can give his heart the slap and say honestly: 'I never rob the people of this famous usage'—down on your knees, and ask pardon of the injured British public. Nay, do not stammer out that the device is stale—used up—that audiences are sick and tired of it. You know 'a thing of beauty is a joy for ever.' You know that the poker has only to be big enough, and hot enough—for when it is brought on the stage, the veriest sceptic would scout the idea of its being merely *painted*—and that you have but to use it enough, when straightway the audience will roar with inextinguishable laughter, until, in mercy to their aching ribs, you lay aside 'the brand Excalibur.' You know that from time immemorial the free employment of the red-hot poker has been an integral portion of the harlequinade; and that although year by year we have seen less and less of it, nevertheless, our belief in its appearance is so firm, that until we are past playgoing, we shall ever kindle the imaginations of our grandchildren with tales of those especial glories of the pantomime the darlings are to be taken to—Clown and his red-hot poker. But, Traitors to your craft! you know that when the longed-for evening is over, we—too credulous, alas!—shall stand before our tender innocents abashed, and reft in future of their perfect trust, for we shall have been detected in a fib. You know, moreover, that any man of middle age need but for a moment have his memory plied, even in the dog-days, and he will laugh at the bare remembrance of your red-hot poker. You know that, every Christmas, patriotic artists (and notably those on *Punch*) repeatedly publish sketches of ideal Clowns—how busied, pray? Almost invariably in touching-up Pantaloon with a red-hot poker: yet, though charmed so wisely, you will not attend.

Every Clown can be practically funny. Be the enemy of mankind, and you become the audience's dearest friend. Be cruel—brutally, increasingly, perpetually cruel, and lo! you are intensely funny. For which are the most screaming farces?—Those wherein the hero suffers most misery. Which are the best pantomimes?—Those wherein the Clown beats most people, steals and destroys most property, and uses most red-hot poker. This is the sort of fun wanted. It always has told; it always will tell; and it's cheaper than five thousand-pound transformation scenes—which is the usual figure, I believe. The arts of the scene-painter and stage-machinist are admirable in their degree, and not to be ignored; still, they are but sensual arts, and produce only a passing effect. Now, your genius is, as it were, Homeric—sublime; yours is 'Ercles' vein.' Moreover, the applause bestowed on an elaborate transformation scene is far from being a proof of the house's undivided approbation. It largely consists of an unconscious expression of thanksgiving on the part of the audience that all has gone well so far. However little the danger, no spectator is then free from uneasiness. People sit in unconfessed fear and trembling lest a ballet-girl should catch fire; or else one of the advancing unfolding pieces hitch, and an awful gas-catastrophe ensue. They applaud the scenery, certainly, but at the same time feel that the sooner the requisite amount of applause is contributed the better, for then the sooner anxiety will be allayed by all the glitter and possible danger being shut in by the less-pretending, but far safer 'Toy-shop, Poulterer's, and Railway Booking-office.' Not a spangle was used in *Mother*

Goose—that immortal pantomime achieved its run and reputation solely by the exertions of Harlequin and Clown.

Uprouse ye, then, my merry, merry men, to alter the questions folk now put ere going to see a pantomime—'Shall it be *Blue Beard*, or *Harlequin Gulliver*?' 'Who wrote the opening?' 'By whom has the scenery been painted?'—and force them to ask instead the only really essential question—'Where's the best Clown?' as they can't fail to do, if you will but be true to the first principles of your calling. 'The cobbler should not go beyond his last.' So leave posturing for acrobats to the less classic boards of a so-called Music Hall, and harmonicon and fiddle playing to the gentlemen of the orchestra. You are 'laughter-loving, mirth-inspiring Clowns'; and no clever fiddling or tumbling ever inspired mirth. Waste not your valuable cruelty in training a 'troupe' of dogs. Never dance on a spade. If you must bring one in, dig somebody in the ribs with it—or you may remember Ingoldsby's 'Spectre of Tappington?'—well, do *that*. In a spill and pelt, take care that people really are hit. Never mind hurting the supers—supers have no more right to feel pain than eels have. Check the growing activity of Pantaloon. Some of these old boys have actually taken to turning glib somersaults! Prefer the Lover to Sprites; he takes ill-usage so debonnairly, while you can't hit a sprite. Look to your legs! Why, they're getting straight; you aren't knock-knee'd now a days; neither do your calves grow at the side of your shins! Shew us your tongue oftener. And you don't eat enough of the right sort of food—sausages, raw fish, vegetables, and the like—nor do you sufficiently signify by gesture whether or not what you do eat delights the palate. As for sausages, it is years since a legitimate chain of them has been seen at a west-end theatre. (Let us hope that the authorities of the university of Cambridge are not growing lax in the discharge of one of their chief duties, and neglect to supply the original article from which to model.) Remember Corporal Nym's dictum: 'The good-humour is to steal at a moment's rest.' Lastly, and above everything, let us have plenty of red-hot poker.

THE NAMELESS MONUMENT.

A LEVEL stone that Time hath fretted,
Bitten often, and ground away,
Till now there is left but a dark, damp slab,
To catch sometimes a wandering ray.
No name, no effigy, date, or badge;
No smear of gilding, or bloom of paint;
No chevron or fess, or shred of mail;
No mournful angel or watchful saint.

All, all gone! The pride and pomp,
The dead man's vanity, all defaced.
Time, like a cruel, envious churl,
Both title and epitaph hath erased;
And now the poor corpse, abbot or knight,
Martyr or king, hath a nameless tomb,
A mere flat slab of refuse stone,
To guard his bones till the day of doom.

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